



ROCKFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

NUMBER: 40.07

TITLE: Vehicle Pursuits

SERIES NUMBER: 40

SERIES TITLE / SUBJECT: Law Enforcement Operations

TOPICS/ REFERENCE: High-Speed Pursuit; Pursuit Policy; Pursuit Procedures

APPENDICIES: None

ORIGINAL / EFFECTIVE ISSUE DATE: August 02, 2006

DATE OF LAST REVISION: May 01, 2013

THIS ORDER REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL REVISED OR RECINDED

CALEA STANDARDS: 41.2.2

Policy:

Vehicle pursuits of a fleeing auto(s), although sometimes necessary, present a danger to the lives of the public, officers, and suspect(s) involved in the pursuit. It is the policy of the Rockford Police Department to protect life in a reasonable and practical manner when enforcing the law. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Department to assist officers in the safe performance of their duties. To effect these obligations, it is the policy of the Department to narrowly regulate the manner, which vehicle pursuits are undertaken and performed. When the risks to human life and/or property out-weigh the benefits of capture, officers should refrain or disengage from pursuits.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to state the guidelines to be followed during vehicle pursuits. The objective of a vehicle pursuit is to maintain police contact with a fleeing driver, without unnecessary endangerment to life and property, until that individual can be apprehended. All officers involved in a vehicle pursuit must be prepared to justify their actions.

This Order is comprised of the following numbered sections:

- I. DEFINITIONS
- II. PROCEDURES
- III. REPORTING, REVIEW AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
- IV. EFFECTIVE DATE
- V. REVIEWS, REVISIONS AND CANCELLATIONS

I. Definitions:

- A. Vehicle Pursuit – An active attempt by an officer in an *authorized emergency vehicle* (See definition) to apprehend fleeing suspects who, by use of a motorized

vehicle, are attempting to avoid apprehension through evasive tactics, or failure to stop.

B. Authorized Emergency Vehicle

From the *Illinois Compiled Statutes / Illinois Vehicle Code*:

(625 ILCS 5/1-105) (from Ch. 95 1/2, par. 1-105)

Sec. 1-105. Authorized emergency vehicle. Emergency vehicles of municipal departments or public service corporations as are designated or authorized by proper local authorities; police vehicles; vehicles of the fire department; vehicles of a HazMat or technical rescue team authorized by a county board under Section 5-1127 of the Counties Code; ambulances; vehicles of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency; and vehicles of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

- C. Primary Unit – The police vehicle that initiates a pursuit or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit as the lead vehicle (the first police vehicle immediately behind the fleeing suspect).
- D. Secondary Unit – Any police vehicle which becomes involved as a secondary to the primary unit and follows the primary unit at a safe distance.
- E. Marked Emergency Police Vehicle – Any police vehicle identifiable by decals or painted lettering of the word “Police” and/or a conspicuously placed police department seal or insignia; also equipped with flashing, oscillating or revolving warning lights and siren permanently mounted on or within the vehicle.
- F. Unmarked Emergency Police Vehicle – Any police vehicle without distinctive identifiable markings but equipped with permanently mounted or portable flashing, oscillating or revolving warning lights and siren.
- G. Special Purpose Vehicle – Any Rockford Police Department vehicle, other than a marked or unmarked squad car (sedan), normally used for patrol, crime prevention and suppression, traffic law enforcement or routine investigations.

NOTE: Unless extreme circumstances exist, *Special Purpose Vehicles* should not be used to initiate or become involved in vehicle pursuits.

Examples of *Special Purpose Vehicles* include but are not limited to:

- Bicycles
- Bomb Unit vehicles
- Chaplain’s Division vehicles
- Evidence and Property Unit vehicles
- Hostage Negotiation Unit van
- I.D. Unit vans
- K-9 squad cars
- Rockford Narcotics surveillance and raid vehicles
- Mobile Command Unit vehicles
- Patrol Shift supervisor SUVs
- Police motorcycles
- Squadrol vans
- SWAT vehicles
- Traffic Unit Supervisor SUVs

H. Street Paralleling – Driving a police vehicle on a street parallel to a street on which a pursuit is occurring.

I. Caravanning – The operation of police units in a group either in a line or alongside each other in a high-speed pursuit situation. Forcible Stop Techniques:

1. Roadblock: A restriction or obstruction used or intended for the purpose of preventing free passage of motor vehicles on a roadway in order to effect the apprehension of a violator.

2. Boxing In/Rolling Roadblock: The surrounding of a violator's moving vehicle with moving pursuit vehicles which are then slowed to a stop along with the violator's vehicle.
3. Vehicle Contact Action (Ramming, Police Immobilization Technique): Any action undertaken by the pursuing officer intended to result in contact between the moving police vehicle and the pursued vehicle.
4. Heading Off: An attempt to terminate a pursuit by pulling ahead of, behind or toward a violator's moving vehicle to force it to come to a stop.
- J. Pursuit Termination Devices (Stop Sticks) – Self contained tire-deflating devices for deployment across the roadway.
- K. Terminate – All units discontinue emergency vehicle operation, resume the posted speed limit and cease pursuit of the fleeing vehicle.

II. Procedures:

A. Initiation of Pursuit

1. The decision to initiate a pursuit must be based on the pursuing officer's conclusion that the immediate danger to the public created by the pursuit is less than the immediate or potential danger to the public should the suspect remain at large.
2. A Rockford police officer may initiate a vehicle pursuit if all of the following are met:
 - a. The suspect exhibits the intention to avoid arrest by using a vehicle to flee apprehension.
 - b. The suspect operating the vehicle refuses to stop at the direction of the officer; and
 - c. There is an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm represented by the continued freedom of the suspect.
3. Using these criteria for initiating a pursuit, it is the policy of the Rockford Police Department that no pursuit will be initiated for a traffic offense stop. The pursuit will not be initiated and follow-up investigation will be conducted for enforcement action.
4. Only a Rockford Police officer in a marked emergency police vehicle (see definitions) may initiate or be involved in a pursuit, unless there is an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm represented by the continued freedom of the suspect. The pursuit will be relinquished to an officer in a marked emergency vehicle as soon as possible and the officer of the unmarked or special purpose vehicle (see definitions) will terminate involvement with the pursuit.
5. The pursuing officer will consider the following factors in determining whether to initiate a pursuit:
 - a. The initial reason for enacting the pursuit;
 - b. The performance capabilities of the pursuit vehicle;
 - c. The condition of the road surface upon which the pursuit is being conducted;
 - d. The amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the area;
 - e. Weather conditions;
 - f. Time of day – day of week, as they would affect traffic volume;
 - g. The speed of the fleeing vehicle.

B. Pursuit Officer Responsibilities

1. The pursuing officer will immediately notify the Communications Center that a pursuit is underway. The officer will provide communications personnel with the following information:
 - a. Unit identification;
 - b. Location, speed, and direction of travel of the fleeing vehicle;
 - c. Description and license plate number, if known, of the fleeing vehicle;
 - d. Number of occupants in the fleeing vehicle, and descriptions, where possible, or name of suspect(s) if known.
 - e. Reasons supporting the decision to pursue.
2. Failure to provide this information to the Communications Center may result in an immediate decision by a supervisor to order its termination.
3. The primary pursuit unit will reduce their level of pursuit to that of support or secondary unit if another vehicle is assigned primary pursuit responsibility.
4. Any primary or secondary unit sustaining damage to, or failure of essential vehicle equipment, (i.e. emergency lighting, siren, brakes), during pursuit will immediately cease participation in the pursuit. The officer/unit will notify the Communications Center so that another unit may be assigned to the pursuit.
5. The officer(s) will immediately terminate the pursuit when advised by a supervisor to do so.
6. There will be no caravanning of police units not involved in the pursuit or paralleling of the pursuit route using warning lights and siren.
7. The pursuing officer will immediately terminate the pursuit when the risk to human life and/or property outweighs the benefit of capture.

C. Communications Center Responsibilities

Upon notification that a pursuit is in progress, Communications Center personnel will immediately advise a patrol supervisor on the street and the Shift Commander of essential information regarding the pursuit. Communication personnel will carry out the following activities and responsibilities during the pursuit.

- a. Receive and record all incoming information on the pursuit and the pursued vehicle;
- b. Control all radio communication and clear the radio channel of all non-emergency calls;
- c. Obtain criminal record and vehicle checks of the suspects;
- d. Coordinate and dispatch secondary assistance under the direction of the patrol supervisor;
- e. Notify neighboring jurisdictions, where practical, when the pursuit may extend into their jurisdiction.

D. Supervisor's Responsibilities

1. Upon notification that a vehicle pursuit is in progress, the supervisor will assume responsibility for the monitoring and control of the pursuit as it progresses.

2. The supervisor will immediately determine whether the pursuit was initiated in accordance with the provisions of this policy and will permit the pursuit to be continued only if policy has been fully complied with to the best of the supervisor's knowledge.
 3. The supervisor will continuously review the incoming data to determine whether the pursuit should be continued or terminated. The supervisor will terminate the pursuit immediately when the risks to human life and/or property outweigh the benefits of capture.
 4. The supervisor will be responsible for coordination of the pursuit as follows:
 - a. Directing pursuit vehicles into or out of the pursuit;
 - b. Re-designation of primary, and secondary vehicle responsibilities
 - c. Approval, disapproval, and coordination of pursuit tactics; and
 - d. Approval or disapproval to leave the jurisdiction to continue pursuit.
 5. The supervisor may approve and assign additional vehicles to assist the primary and secondary pursuit vehicles based on an analysis of:
 - a. The nature of the offense for which pursuit was initiated;
 - b. The number of suspects and any known propensity for violence;
 - c. The number of officers in the pursuit vehicles;
 - d. Any damage or injuries to the assigned primary and secondary vehicles or officers;
 - e. The number of officers necessary to make an arrest at the conclusion of the pursuit; and
 - f. Any other clear and articulable facts that would warrant the increased risks caused by additional pursuit vehicles.
- E. Traffic Regulations During Pursuit
1. Although officers are permitted to suspend conformance with normal traffic regulations during a pursuit, officers will at all times, drive in a manner exercising reasonable care for the safety of themselves and all other persons and property within the pursuit area.
 2. Each unit authorized to engage in vehicle pursuits will be required to activate headlights and all emergency equipment prior to beginning a pursuit if not already activated (including passenger restraint devices).
 3. Upon approaching an intersection controlled by traffic signals or signs, or any other location at which there is an increased likelihood of a collision, the driver of any pursuit vehicle will reduce the vehicle's speed so as to avoid a collision with another vehicle or pedestrian. Once having reduced speed the officers will insure their intended path is clear before proceeding through an intersection or otherwise increasing speed.
 4. Pursuing officers will maintain complete control of their vehicles at all times.
- F. Pursuit Tactics
1. Unless expressly authorized by a supervisor, the pursuit will be limited to the assigned primary and secondary vehicles. The secondary vehicle will maintain a safe distance behind the primary unit, but close enough behind to render assistance if and when required. Officers are not

otherwise permitted to join the pursuit team. This does not prevent officers from driving towards the area of the pursuit, without use of emergency lights and siren, to provide assistance if the pursuit evolves into a foot pursuit, traffic crash or terminates in another manner.

2. Officers may not use any forcible stop techniques unless there is sufficient justification for the use of deadly force.
3. Departmental policy pertaining to the use of force (General Order 1.09) will be adhered to during the pursuit.
4. No pursuits will be conducted in a police vehicle in which an individual who is not a sworn law enforcement peace officer is either the driver or the passenger.

G. Termination of the Pursuit

1. A decision to terminate pursuit may be the most rational means of preserving the lives and property of the public, the officers and suspects engaged in pursuit. The pursuing officer, a supervisor, or the Shift Commander on duty may terminate the pursuit.
2. The pursuit will be immediately terminated in any of the following circumstances:
 - a. Weather or traffic conditions substantially increase the danger of pursuit beyond the worth of apprehending a suspect;
 - b. The distance between the pursuit and fleeing vehicles is so great that further pursuit is futile; or
 - c. The risks to human life and/or property outweigh the benefit of capture.

H. Inter/Intra-jurisdictional Pursuits

1. The pursuing officer will notify the Communications Center when it is likely that a pursuit will continue into a neighboring or concurrent jurisdiction, or across a county line.
2. The supervisor will determine if the pursuit is to continue or is to be terminated. If the pursuit is continued, the appropriate jurisdiction(s) should be contacted by the Communication Center and all involved officers should, if possible, switch to the ISPERN frequency.
3. If another agency's pursuit enters the City of Rockford and that agency requests assistance, the Shift Commander will determine if Rockford police units will participate in the pursuit and to what level of participation. If Rockford units do participate, all provisions of this General Order will be adhered to.

I. Pursuit Termination Devices (Stop Sticks)

1. Each Patrol Supervisor's vehicle has been equipped with three; three-foot long section stop sticks as well as mini stop sticks.
2. Stop sticks are designed to penetrate and deflate the tire(s) of a moving vehicle in a manner that will avoid a catastrophic failure of the penetrated tire, thus assuring the safest possible means of stopping a fleeing vehicle.
3. Stop sticks will be used on four wheel vehicles only. They are not to be used for motorcycles, passenger buses, trucks, vans, or other two or

three wheeled vehicles, unless the use of deadly force is legally justified. (General Order 1.09)

4. Three-foot stop sticks are recommended for use at speeds over 10 mph. The three-foot stop sticks are also omni directional. They can be placed in any orientation perpendicular to the path of an oncoming target vehicle.
5. Stop sticks are to be used only when authorized and deployed by a supervisor. Mini stop sticks are to be used only on parked vehicles.
6. If a situation arises where a supervisor determines that the use of stop sticks would be appropriate, he/she will determine the location where the sticks will be placed.
 - a. Stop sticks should be deployed in areas with unobstructed views of the roadway from both directions to aid deployment and lessen the possibility of an accident. They should be used at a location that provides substantial protection for the deploying officer.
 - b. Every reasonable effort should be made to avoid using the devices on road surfaces in the immediate vicinity of standing water, ice or snow, exceptionally rough pavement, unpaved roads, or other unique characteristics or circumstances which would indicate a foreseeable increase in the risk of a serious accident.
 - c. At deployment, the device should be placed on the roadway and not held onto by anyone. Once the device is deployed, officers should seek secure cover for their protection. The supervisor should also remain in the area of deployment until the device is removed.
 - d. Once the system has been placed in position, all units should be advised that the system has been deployed and of its location to prevent other units from accidentally driving over the system.
 - e. Once the pursued vehicle passes over the system, the vehicle may not stop immediately. For this reason, officers should be stationed several blocks away in the direction the vehicle was traveling prior to crossing the system.
 - f. The device should be removed from the roadway after the fleeing vehicle has passed and only after great care has been taken by officers to make certain there is no moving traffic on the roadway.
 - g. The Stop Stick System will be used one time only. Once used, it should be brought to the Equipment Room and a new set of stop sticks obtained and placed in the supervisor's vehicle.

III. Reporting, Review and Training Requirements:

- A. All officers involved in any pursuit, even if the pursuit is terminated and the suspect is not apprehended, will leave an incident report concerning their actions.
 1. Only one incident report and is required from multiple officer units.
 2. Report Review/Records will make copies of all vehicle pursuit reports to be forwarded to the Training Unit.
 3. The pursuing unit will leave the originals and all other units, including supervisors, will leave supplements.

- B. Incident reports will be reviewed by a supervisor following the normal incident report review process.
- C. Vehicle pursuit incident reports will be reviewed by a supervisor following the normal incident report review process. Copies of vehicle pursuit reports will be forwarded to and reviewed by both the Deputy Chief of the reporting officer's assigned Bureau, the Training Unit Supervisor and the Office of Professional Standards.
- D. The purpose of supervisory review is to ensure appropriate justification and tactics were applied to the incident under review. Any reviewing supervisor may make suggestions for improved policy or training of vehicle pursuit situations.
- E. The Training Unit supervisor will be responsible for an annual analysis of vehicle pursuit incidents, to be submitted in writing to the Deputy Chief of Administration, for the purpose of determining patterns or trends that could indicate training needs, equipment upgrades, and/or policy modifications.
- F. A review of this order will be conducted on an annual basis during roll call training.

IV. Effective Date:

- A. The effective date of this General Order is August 02, 2006.
- B. Replaces General Order 1979-01 (G-4), dated April 12, 2002.

V. Reviews, Revisions and Cancellations:

- A. This General Order will be reviewed annually by the Commander of the field Services Bureau and, when necessary, revised or cancelled in accordance with the procedures for reviewing written directives established in General Order *10.01 – Written Directives*.
- B. Any employee with suggestions for revisions and/or improvements to this order are encouraged to submit their ideas to the Deputy Chief of the Field Services Bureau.

BY ORDER OF

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Chet Epperson
Chief of Police